



Press Release

Lake County Sheriff's Office
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Daniel A. Dunlap
Sheriff

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Traffic accidents! Unfortunately we have come to expect them this time of year in Northeast Ohio in our adverse weather conditions. But at best they bring traffic patterns to a screeching halt, damage your vehicle and others as well, cause you time and money in vehicle repairs ... the list is endless. At worst, people lose their life!

In our area, on highways where normal speeds are 60-70 miles per hour, and with the increasing traffic patterns we have seen over the past 5 years, there is an alarming rise in motor vehicle accidents. Too often such collisions are senseless and largely due to excessive speed, and the failure to insure there is enough distance between you and the car in front of you in order to allow you the needed time to respond to oncoming trouble, and bring your vehicle to a safe stop. Snow, rain and ice compound the problem with clear ice (often called black ice) that is virtually transparent, wet roads that cause hydroplaning, and heavy snow covered roadways. Add poor tire treads, and disaster is waiting around the next curve or behind the next brake light.

Think about this. If you are driving 60 mph in average driving conditions and something happens in front of you that requires you to stop safely, it would take you 6.87 seconds to do so (that is allowing a for a 1 second delay for you to react and begin breaking) and you would travel 300 feet to do so. That's the length of a football field.

You can make a tremendous impact on insuring your safety, and others as well, by maintaining the proper car lengths between you and the vehicle you are following. The distance you need to maintain depends on driving conditions. Here are some sound recommendations to go by:

- For speeds between 35 and 55 mile per hour (*in ideal traffic conditions with good weather, good road surfaces and light traffic*) keep a 3 second distance between you and vehicle in front of you.

- For speeds between 55 and 70 mile per hour, or during rain, on wet pavement or in heavy traffic, keep a 4 second distance between you and vehicle in front of you.
- When roads are snow covered or icy, keep a 7-8 second distance between you and vehicle in front of you.

The best way to determine the right following distance is to pick out a fixed object on the road in front of you, such as a sign. When the vehicle ahead of you passes that object then you should begin to count “one-one thousand, two-one thousand, three-one thousand”. If you reach the object you selected before reach “three-one thousand” then you are following too close to that vehicle, and you need to back-off. Giving you this adequate space allows the necessary time to react to problems in front of you, and safely bring your vehicle to a stop without collision.

Just as important, we recommend you need to properly plan your travel times and routes based on the time of day and weather conditions.

- If weather conditions are adverse then give yourself more time to reach your destination.
- We are all familiar with rush hour times in our communities. When possible wait until traffic is lighter to drive to a destination.
- It may take more time but when possible, when traffic is heavy or weather is adverse, find an alternative route that is less traveled and where a safer speed can be maintained.

We here at the Sheriff’s Office, and throughout our Lake County Law Enforcement community, urge everyone to use caution and good planning the remainder of this winter season, and every day of the year, driving through out Lake County. Drive safely! The life you save may just be your own.

Frank Leonbruno

Chief Deputy, Lake County Sheriff’s Office
104 East Erie Street Painesville, Ohio 44077
www.lakecountyohio.gov/sheriffoffice

